
Abstract

Method and System for Delivering Media Selections through a Network

In a large-scale video-on-demand (VOD) system, the scalability and the provision of truly interactive functions are two difficult problems which have not been resolved satisfactorily. It is easy to provide fully interactive functions using unicast streams but these systems are limited in their scalability which affect the cost of service provisioning. Batching systems based on multicast streaming, on the other hand, can increase the scalability but it is difficult to provide interactive functions on these systems. This invention provides a media delivery system having a novel architecture aiming at serving millions of users in a metropolitan area. It features hybrid multicast-unicast streaming to achieve both scalability and full interactivity through the provision of distributed interactive servers, which cached the multicast media streams generated by the media servers. The interactive servers may also provide fault tolerant routing and error recovery.